

# THE HOLY DISCIPLE;

(Or, the HISTORY of

## JOSEPH of ARIMATHEA.

Wherein is contained a true Account of his Birth; his Parents; his Country; his Education; his Piety; and his bearing of Pontius Pilate the Body of our blessed Saviour, after his Crucifixion, which he buried in a new Sepulchre of his own. Also the Occasion of his coming to England, where he first preached the Gospel at Glastenbury, in Somersetshire, where is still growing that noted White Thorn which buds ever Christmas-day in the Morning, blossoms at Noon, and fades, at Night, on the Place where he pitched his Tent in the Ground. With a full Relation of his Death and Burial.

To which is added,

MEDITATIONS ON THE BIRTH, LIFE, DEATH, and RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.



NEWCASTLE: Printed in this present Year.

Be thou Faithful unto Death, and  
I will give thee a Crown of Life.  
Rev. ii. 10.



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T H E  
HOLY DISCIPLE, &c.

**T**HE Person we are going to speak of, is named *Joseph*, who was a just, holy, pious, and devout Man, born at *Arimathea* otherwise called *Ramath*, and afterwards *Ramula*. It was a City formerly allotted for the *Levites*, and situated near *orhim*, on Mount *Ephraim*, near the Confines of the Tribes of *Benjamin* and *Dan*: And farther, it is noted for being the Birth-place of *Samuel* the Prophet, who there lived and died, and was buried; but after a long Time his Bones were translated out of *Judea*, and found an Interment

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ment in that Part of *Greece*, which is now called *Thrace*.

Here *Joseph* was born, and from the Place of his Birth was called *Joseph* of *Arimathea*. He was the Son of one *Matthias*, who was considerable for his Extraction, but more for his Justice and Authority in *Jerusalem* which (before its Destruction by *Titus Vespasian*) was the Metropolis of that Country. He was brought up, during his tender Years, with one *Jonathan*, who was his Brother by the same Father and Mother, with whom he happily profited in all Kinds of Sciences, having a good Memory and quick Apprehension; so that being yet a Child of fifteen Years of Age, he was praised by all Men, in regard of the good Affection he had to Learning; and the Priest and noblest Citizens vouchsafed to ask his Opinion of Things that concerned their Laws and Ordinances.

He was born about eight Years before the Nativity of our blessed Lord and Saviour



Saviour Jesus Christ; and at about the Age of seventeen Years, his Desire being to search and get an insight into the *Jewish* Nation which was there, he began first with the *Pharisees*, which is the Chief; Secondly with the *Sadducees*; and, Thirdly, with the *Essenes*; to the End he might chuse the best of the three. When he understood them all, he declined the two latter, and adhered to the former, addicting himself to such great Austerities and Labours, that hearing of one *Malachi*, a holy Man, who lived in a Desert, cloathed himself with nothing but what the Trees brought forth, fed on no other Kind of Meat but what they freely yeilded, and washed himself oftentimes by Day and Night in cold Water to keep himself chaste, he went and lived with him, and imitated his Course of Life for the Space of four Years, at which Time he returned to *Jerusalem* again, at the Age of about one and twenty Years.

But now altho' *Joseph of Arimathea* had entirely devoted himself to the Sect of the *Pharisees*, yet was he not addicted to the Vices which too evidently appeared in their Manners, especially in Hypocrisy; for he was really just in his Dealings, pious without Ostentation, and very charitable in private; inso-much, that he gained the Praise of the Rich, and Benediction of the Poor, wherever he went, and gloried more to be a good Man, than a great Senator; to which Dignity his incomparable Merits has justly preferred him.

However, when *Jesus Christ* began to take upon him the great Work of the Ministry of the Gospel, and by his holy Life, pure Doctrine, and supernatural Miracles had procured many *Jews* to embrace what he taught them. Amongst the Rest of his Followers, this *Joseph of Arimathea* became a great Admirer of our Saviour's Preaching; inso-much that, declining the *Levitical* Laws as then taught in the *Jewish Church*, he became

became a sincere Convert, and followed Christ in all the Journies which he took throughout the Land of *Judea* and *Galilee*, for the Promulgation of his holy Gospel

But when *Jesus* was betrayed by *Judas*, who sold the precious Blood of his Lord and Master for the Value of thirty Pence, and after the Condemnation was pass'd upon him by *Pontious Pilate*, the Roman President of *Syria*, and he was crucified on the Cross for the Sins of the World; as soon as he was dead, this *Joseph of Arimathea*, who was a rich Man, went, (as the Evangelist *St Matthew* tells us, Chap. xxvii. Ver. 58, 59, 60.) to *Pilate* and begged the Body of *Jesus*; Then *Pilate* commanded the Body to be delivered. And when *Joseph* had taken the Body, he wrapped it in a clean Linen Cloth, and laid it in his own new Tomb, which he had hewn out of the Rock; and he rolled a great Stone to the Door of the Sepulchre, and departed.

Now as for the Manner of this Sepulchre wherein our Saviour was laid, take the Description thereof as given us by *Adrichomius*, in his Relations of the Holy Land, which is as follows; *The glorious Sepulchre of our Lord, (said he) was a new Monument, eight Foot in Length, which was situated one hundred and eight Foot from Fount Cavelry, and distant one thousand Paces from Mount Sion.*

Here it was that *Joseph of Arimathea*, a noble Senator cut out of a Rock that was in his Garden, a Place of Interment, in which he, together with *Nicodemus*, the blessed *Mary*, and other Women, took from the Cross, and buried, by the Consent of *Pilate*, the Body of *Jesus*, which they had wrapped up in fine Linen, perfumed with Myrrh and Aloes. His Head was placed towards the West, from whence it has been a Custom ever since amongst Christians, to bury the Dead in all Church-yards with their Faces looking towards the East; and those that attended his sacred Funeral,

neral, having rolled a great Stone to the Door of the Monument, they then returned to their several Habitations. In the mean Time the Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the Pharisees, endeavouring to hinder the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, they immediately set a strong Guard of Soldiers to watch the Sepulchre, the Mouth whereof they had closely shut, and set their Seal on the Door, whereby they might not be deceived through any Fraud, either of his Disciples, or their own Keepers.

But this Diligence of the *Jews*, who would have obstructed the Wonder of his rising did rather increase the Miracle, and confirm the Truth of our Saviour's Resurrection; for on the third Day after his Crucifixion, receiving Life again, he came out of the Tomb, and appeared to *Mary Magdalen*, first in the Likeness of a Gardener, according to these Words of the Evangelist *St John*, Chap. xx. Verse 15. *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepst thou? Whom seekest thou? She supposing it to be*  
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*the Gardener said unto him, Sir, if thou hast born him hence, tell me where thou laia him, and I will take him away.*

After the Death of our Saviour, *Joseph of Arimathea* led a solitary Life for about six Months, in Commemoration of our Saviour's Crucifixion, for his Salvation, as well as the whole Race of Mankind; but this Time of Penitency being compleated, he came again among the Apostles, and by *St Peter* he was adopted one of the Seventy-two Disciples. So to make good that great Charge which he had took upon him. understanding that *Felix*, who then governed *Jerusalem*, certain noble Christians, Men of much Honour and more Virtue, were for professing the Christian Faith, sent to *Rome*, by his Commandment, to answer what was objected against them, in *Cesar's* Presence, he being desirous to do them Service; and having specified Intelligence that the Torments wherewith they were martyr'd, lessened not their Piety, but that they lived contented on Figs and Nuts, he for this Cause departed  
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immediately for *Rome*, and was encountered with many and grievous Hazards at Sea; for the Ship wherein he tailed was wreck'd in the *Adriatick* Sea, and about six Hundred of them were forced to swim all Night long, and at Day-break, by God's Providence, a *Cyrenian* Ship came in Sight, and both he and certain others, to the Number of Fourscore, out-swimm'd the Rest, were taken up in it, and saved from perishing.

After he had in this Sort escaped, he went to *Dicaearchia*, with the *Italians* call at this Day *Putcoli*, and grew acquainted with *Baliturus*, a Jew born, who was a Comedian, and in good Reputation with *Tiberius*, by whose Means very soon insinuating himself into the Empress *Poppeia's* Knowledge, he determined to beseech her to procure the Liberty, with all Expedition, of those Christians that were in Bondage there, which she accordingly did; and being gratified likewise by her with many rich Gifts, he returned again into his own native Country.

Being

Being now returned Home, and giving a full and good Account to the twelve Apostles, of what Services he had done for the Vindication of the Christian Liberty at *Rome*, which he had obtained, he was appointed and ordained to go and preach the Gospel in *England*; and accordingly, as the Mission had commanded him, he took Shipping at *Joppa*, a Sea-port Town in *Jerusalem*, and sailed with a great Deal of Difficulty, and in many dangerous Storms through the *Mediterranean* Sea, he at length landed at *Barrow-bay* in *Somersetshire*, and then proceeding forwards on his Journey eleven Miles that Day, which was to *Glastenbury* in the same Country; where fixing his Pilgrim's Staff in the Ground, it was no sooner set in the Earth, but, just like *Aaron's Rod*, it blossom'd Flowers, whence there being a Contest between him and other learned *Jews* for the Pristhood, it was presently turned into a blossoming Thorn; which supernatural Miracle made the numerous Spectators, who came to see this Stranger, be extraordinary attentive to

to hear him preach the Gospel; which was concerning *Christ crucified for the Redemption of Mankind.*

Here, at *Glastenbury* in *Somersetshire*, he arrived about three Years after the Death of our blessed Redeemer, being then in the forty-fourth Year of his Age, doing then such great and wonderful Miracles, that he presently brought to the Conversion of *Jesus Christ* above one Thousand Souls. Besides, as *Eusebius*, *Sozomenes*, and *Ruffinus*, three most faithful Ecclesiastic Writers relate, that he baptized at the City of *Wells*, which is within four Miles of *Glastenbury*, eighteen Thousand Persons in one Day. So devout, zealous, and holy was the Life of *Joseph of Arimathea*, that tho' he found the Inhabitants of this Island very barbarous and superstitious, yet by wholesome Admonitions, and learnedly as well as strenuously exhorting them to change their erroneous Opinions, representing before their Eyes the Heinousness of their damnable Folly and Blindness, he piously persuaded them not to hazard the Salvation of their precious

cious Souls, and their whole Posterity, by embracing downright Idolatry, in worshipping the Sun, Moon, and Stars as well as living Creatures, both on Earth and in the Sea.

Thus *Joseph of Arimathea*, by his godly Life and good Behaviour, having obtained the Goodwill of one *Ethelbertus*, a King then reigning in the Western Parts of *England*, and many of his Nobles, whom he converted to the Christian Faith, he founded a most famous Abbey at *Glastenbury*, which was the first Christian Church in this Part of the World; and by the large Endowments settled upon it afterwards, by other Christian Princes, it became one of the richest Monasteries in *Christendom*.

In this ancient Town of *Glastenbury*, the holy *Joseph of Arimathea* continued 'till the Day of his Death, which was forty-two Years, so that he was eighty-six Years of Age, when he died: And so venerable was his Person then held, that six Kings of those Western Parts honoured his



his Corpse, by carrying them on their royal Shoulders to the Grave, which was made in the Chancel of *Glastenbury* Abbey, and had a most statley Tomb erected over him, with the following Inscription thereon:

*Here lies interr'd, the Body of that most holy Diciple, so much noted and recoræd in Scripture, by the Name of JOSEPH of ARIMATHEA, and noted by the four Evangelists, St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, and St John for his generous Action in going to Pilate, and begging the Body of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when crucified, to redeem lost Mankind from eternal Destruction, and burying it in a Tomb of his own making. He died Anno Dom. 78, aged 86 Years.*

Also the Church-yard of *Glastenbury*, formerly called *Avalonia*, is noted for being the Burial-place of King *Authur*; whose Sepulchre was searched for by King *Henry* the Second, which was found under a Stone, with an Inscription upon it, fastened almost nine Foot in the Ground:  
And

And also, in Veneration for *Joseph of Arimathea*, a great Lady living at *Glastenbury*, a little after the Death of this holy Man, obtained of her Husband so much Pasture Ground in a Common by the Town Side, for the Good and Benefit of the Inhabitants, as she was able in a whole Day to walk about Bare-footed.

But what is more remarkable, is the *White Thorn*, otherwise called *The Holy Thorn*, which to this very Time, is noted throughout all *Europe*, for budding yearly on *Christmas-day* in the Morning, blossoming at Noon, and fading at Night: And the Reason is, as above said, for that it was the Staff of *Joseph of Arimathea*, which he used in travelling; and there where this *White Thorn* grows, fixing it in the Earth, it grew to what it now is: And tho' the Times of superstitious Topery, in these Kingdoms, be abolished, yet Thousands of People, of different Opinions, go once a Year to see it, as being a most miraculous Curiosity; which also brings Foreigners

reigners beyond Sea to behold it, at its usual Time of shewing a Wonder that is really supernatural, as being a Matter contrary to the Course of Nature, and may make us cry out with the Psalmist, *O Lord! my God, how marvellous are thy Ways!*



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MEDITATIONS  
ON THE  
BIRTH, LIFE, DEATH,  
AND  
RESURRECTION,  
OF OUR  
*Blessed LORD and SAVIOUR,*  
**JESUS CHRIST.**



*Meditations on the Birth of Christ.*

**H**OW great is the Love of God to  
poor lost, and undone Sinners, in  
finding out a Ransom for them!  
Man was created perfectly righteous, and  
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had a reighseous Law given him to observe, and was furnished with sufficient Strength to obey the Commands, and live up to the Righteousness thereof; but giving Ear to the sly Insinuations of the Devil, he wilfully broke this Law, which was in his Power to have kept, and thereby he became a Rebel against God, and liable to eternal Death. And what shall now help him out of this Condition? Why, herein the Kindness and Love of God appeared, in that in his Love and Pity he found out a Ransom for him. But who was he, and from whence came this Ransom? Why, in the Fulness of Time, God sent his Son: This was that mighty One on whom God was pleased to lay Help for us; it was no other than God's eternal and only begotten Son. But how can this Son of God become a Ransom for sinful Men? Why, by the secret (but powerful) Emanations of the holy Spirit, he was conceived in the Womb of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, and so was made of a Woman. And O how inestimable is this Mystery, that the great God should thus assume the Nature of Man  
and



and by incomprehensible Condescension take into a close and everlasting Union with his own Divinity! This is a Mystery to be admir'd, ador'd, and received by our Faith; but not to be measured by the Line of humain Reason! And if we do not consider how great a Gift this Son of God was to us, it cannot but be a mighty Support of our Faith, and enable all Believers to draw the same Inference from it that the holy Apostle does *He that spareth not his only Son, how shall he not with him freely give us all Things?* This blessed Son of God, this Seed of the Woman promised to *Adam in Paradise*, of whom it was prophecy'd, that he should *bruise the Serpent's Head*, was accordingly born into the World in the Fulness of Time designed by the Father, which was near the four thousandth Year thereof, and in the Forty-second of *Augustus Caesar*, the *Roman Emperor*, the Sceptre being then departed from *Judah*, according to the Prophecy of good old *Jacob*, *Gen. xlix. 10.* and he was born at *Bethlechem* (which signifies a *House of Bread*) and well might

( 21 )  
it be called so, since there the Bread of Life came down from Heaven, even that Bread which gives Life to the World, and which nourishes all those that by a lively Faith do feed thereon, unto eternal Life.



*Meditations on the Life of Christ.*

**B**UT what was the Errand this blessed Son of God came into the World upon! In Heaven he thought it not a-miss to be equal with God, which would have been the highest Blasphemy for even Archangels to have thought, but not in the least criminal in him, who was *the Man his Fellow*, Zech. xiii. 7. who was not only the Son of Man, as he took the Flesh of the Virgin *Mary*, but is also *the mighty God, the everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace*, Isai. ix 6. Did he not therefore come into the World array'd in all the Glory of an earthly Monarch, repressing the *Roman Tyranny*, restoring the *Kingdom of Israel*, and ruling in *Judah*, even to the Ends of the Earth?

Earth? Ah, no, he came for other Ends, and for another Purpose: His Kingdom was not of this World; but when he came first into the World, tho' he was Lord of all, he made himself of no Reputation, and took on himself the Form of a Servant, and became obedient, even unto Death: He came to keep that Law that we had broken, and to work out a Righteousness for them that had none of their own: He came to teach us, both by his Precepts and Example, how to live holily here, that we may live happily hereafter: He made himself poor, that we, through his Poverty, might be made rich; *The Foxes had Holes, and the Birds of the Air had Nests, but he had not where to lay his Head.* His whole Life was one continued Act of doing Good, and wrought such Miracles as were never wrought before: He made the Deaf to hear, the Dumb to speak, the Blind to see, the Lame to walk; yea he raised the Dead, cast out Devils, rebuked the Waves, and they obeyed him: He revealed the Mind of God to poor Sinners, and open'd the Treasures of Grace, and  
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Mercy; for tho' the Law was given by  
*Moses, yet Grace and Truth came by Je-*  
*sus Christ*: He reprov'd the *Scribes and*  
*Pharisees* for their Hypocrisy, and fore-  
told the Destruction of the Temple, his  
own Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.



Meditations on Christ's Death and Re-  
surrection.

WE have already considered our  
Lord's Birth, and find it was  
very wonderful, we have taken a View  
of his Life, and find that, without any  
Hyperbole, it was the most absolute Pat-  
tern and Abstract of supreme Perfection;  
his very Enemies were forced to acknow-  
ledge, that *he had done all Things well*:  
And who then, could harm him, while  
he was such a Pattern of all that was  
good? This *Lamb of God* himself once put  
the Question to them, *Many good Works*  
*have I done; for which of these Works*  
*do you stone me?* when they were about  
to do so. Solomon tells us, *Wrath is*  
*cruel, and Anger is outrageous; but who*  
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can stand before Envy. This was the Cause of their putting him to Death; for Pilate who was Judge, knew that for Envy they had delivered him; but to put a fairer Gloss on't, they accuse him of being a Enemy to Caesar, and Pilate (lest he should be thought a Friend to Caesar's Enemy) condemns him. Thus Envy in the Jews, and Fear in the Judge, caused the most Just to be condemn'd and executed as a Malefactor; but tho' his Body was thus made an Offering for Sin, and he made his grave with the Wicked, yet the Bands of Death could not hold him, for the third Day he rose from the Dead, and was declared the Son of God with Power; for it was impossible that he should see Corruption. O how glorious was his Resurrection! With what an astonishing Solemnity was it attended! First there was a great Earthquake, then the Stone was rolled from the Sepulchre by a glorious Angel, which was so illustrious, that the Keepers were as dead Men.

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